

NRO REVIEW  
COMPLETED

20 February 1968

*R.F.J./*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board  
Meeting of 15-16 February 1968

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2. OX CART.

After the briefing on recent OXCART missions, by General Bacalis and Mr. Duckett, Dr. Flax gave an objective summary of the situation for the future as he saw it. He said that there are two issues--first, the respective capabilities of the SR-71 and the OXCART with respect to the tasks for which they were designed and, second, the question of whether a civilian-type capability is desired. He characterized the second as the main issue. On the first point he was frank in stating that OXCART is superior in altitude, swath width, camera quality and, to date, ECM.

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Flax went on to say that since the 303 Committee now has two new members out of four, it may change its previously expressed view on the future of these airplanes.

Dr. Land said he saw no reason not to keep both. Flax conceded that OXCART would provide another string to our bow but that he had not budgeted [ ] required to retain it. He added that if SAC should take over operation of OXCART, there would not be much initial saving although possibly there could be on a long range basis. He stated also that he felt that by mid-April the question of the SR-71's capability for the job could be resolved and that we could then turn to resolution of the principal issue. On this point Mr. Duckett emphasized that a critical problem is one of contractor personnel and that any phaseout date of around June would mean that the period of two to three months before that would be crucial in terms of retaining personnel.

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Dr. Flax concluded by saying that he had agreed with Mr. Bross that the ExCom should discuss all these issues soon after the 30-day test period for the SR-71, which will begin about 15 March. He added that while this is a responsibility of the ExCom, the PFIAB has more latitude to explore various matters than has the ExCom.

cc: DCI  
DDCI

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